

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: September 29, 2019

## An Age Among Ages

by Dan Trygg

“By faith we understand that the ages were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.”

Hebrews 11:3

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup> who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”

Galatians 1:3-4

“To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before every age, and now and unto all the ages. Amen.”

Jude 1:25

Last week, we talked about God as the Supreme Power, the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the Creator, the Source and sustaining power that fashioned and gave the capacity for power to every leader, ruler, dominion and authority, both in the physical world we see and also in the spiritual reality. **There is no power that has not somehow been derived from His ultimate Power.** That does not mean that He approves of every choice or activity of these powers. It just means that they would have no existence or capacity, except what He has permitted and enabled them to have. He *is* the ultimate King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Interestingly, when we first meet God in the biblical record, He is the Creator, ...the intelligent, personal Deity who made our first parents in His image and likeness. He gave *them* the capacity and responsibility of ruling over the fish, birds and animals on this planet (Gen. 1:26). They were to cause other created things to become useful and productive for them. In Genesis 2:15, the record says that God placed humans in the Garden of Eden, a garden that He Himself had planted with food crops that require tending. He placed them there to “work it” and to “preserve it”. Human beings were to develop the land through cultivation, and preserve it from becoming wild and useless. At this time, human stewardship was within the rule and reign of God. *Humanity was serving God by carrying out these responsibilities.*

In Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve chose to obey the counsel of the Serpent, they betrayed the trust that God had given them, and defied the leadership of God, their Creator. The brokenness that was unleashed in that choice was unimaginable, and it affected the totality of their lives. **With that choice, another kingdom was introduced on planet earth, the kingdom of darkness. By choosing to obey Satan, they became his slaves** (Rom. 6:16), **and he stole their rightful authority. He took the rulership of the earth that God intended for humankind. Jesus would later refer to him as the “ruler of this world”** (Jn. 12:31; 16:11). When he tested Jesus in the wilderness, one of his attempts was to show Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, and offer to give all this domain and authority to Jesus, if He would bow down and worship him. He even said, “For it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish” (Lk. 4:6). In Jesus’ response, He did not challenge the devil’s claim. Satan apparently *did* have legal authority over all the kingdoms of this world. In Revelation 13, the rise of the Antichrist will be due to the fact that the dragon (Satan) will give him “his power and his throne and great authority” (vs. 2).

Paul also referred to him as “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4). Interesting language. **What “age”? The “present evil age”** (Gal. 1:4). The Greek word, *aiōn*, is translated as “age”. It occurs 122 times in the NT. It *can* refer to a long period of time, ...or it can refer to an era, eon, epoch, a period of existence, a particular stage or period in history with its own characteristics. **The Bible speaks of “ages”.** Not only is there this present evil age, or “the age of this world” (Eph. 2:2), but it is clear from the scriptures that **this current age will come to an end, or conclusion, and there will be other ages or periods of existence to come, with different characteristic than what we experience here.** Unfortunately, we do not perceive this reality very clearly, because it has not been translated very well. Most of the time *aiōn* is translated as “forever” (‘unto the age’ – Matt. 21:19; Mk. 11:14; Mk. 3:29; Lk. 1:33,55; Jn. 4:14; 6:51,58; 8:35,51,52; 10:38; 11:26; 12:34; 13:8; 14:16; 1 Cor. 8:13; 2 Cor. 9:9; Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17,20,29,28; Rev. 11:15; 14:11; 19:3; or, ‘unto the ages of the ages’ – Rev. 15:7; 20:10; 22:5) or “world” (Rom. 12:2), or “course” (Eph. 2:2). There are people who are “wise in this age” (1 Cor. 3:18), “debaters of this age” (1 Cor. 1:20), and “rulers of this age” (1 Cor. 2:6,8). There are believers who fell away because they “loved this present age” (2 Tim. 4:10). Some are “rich in this present age”, and can be ensnared by those riches (1 Tim. 6:17). There are “worries of this age” which can choke out our spiritual growth (Matt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19). The “sons of this age” are contrasted with the “sons of light”, and sometimes are more shrewd in how they deal with one another (Lk. 16:8), than how we treat others. Finally, while the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, the sons of the coming age, and the resurrection, will neither marry nor be given in marriage (Lk. 20:34,35). **When you consider these passages, you begin to see that we who are in Christ are *not* to live like those who are still “of this age”.** In fact, it is God’s purpose to rescue us from this present evil age, ...**and we are**

**exhorted not to conform ourselves to this age, nor to live according to it.** Our destiny is *not* limited to this present age, but we are to live with our allegiance to the true King of kings, and serve Him, even though we live here in this age. The grace of God instructs us to live righteously, sound-mindedly and good-devotedly in dedication toward Jesus while we are here (Tit. 2:12).

It is important to realize that God is the Creator of all the ages (Heb. 1:2; 11:3), but ***even before the ages, the Lord pre-defined a wisdom which was hidden from view, ...a mystery that was ultimately for our glorification in Him... , a mystery that was before the ages, but now has been revealed, which is Christ dwelling within us*** (1 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26-28). ***This is the basis and hope of our glorification, ...and it is through the outworking and expression of Christ in us, that the wisdom of God could be made visibly expressed through the Church (through your life and mine) to instruct even the spiritual powers in the heavens.*** This was in accordance with God's purpose of the ages which He performed in Christ (Eph. 3:10,11). ***Jesus appeared at the culmination of the ages to put away sin once and for all time by means of the sacrifice of His life on our behalf*** (Heb. 9:26).

So, we learn that ***there were eons before this present age, and there will eons afterwards.*** We also can see that ***God's plan, even before the Serpent's betrayal, was to rescue us from the epoch of evil, brokenness, pain and death*** and to set us free from the bondage of sin and from servitude to the devil (Gal. 1:4). ***Furthermore, Jesus clearly taught us that there will be a conclusion of this present age of brokenness.*** At that time, His angels will take out the stumbling blocks and pretenders, and will sort out those who are false from those who are genuine followers of Christ (Matt. 13:39,40,49; 24:3). ***We also have a "Kingdom Commission" to carry out: We are to make active disciples of people from every nation and people group*** (Matt. 28:20). For that purpose, Jesus Himself, by means of the Holy Spirit, will be with us "all the days, until the conclusion of the age." ***By His indwelling, the glory of God once again is our life. This had been lost to humankind at the fall, but now that possibility is extended to us once again by the Holy Spirit*** (Rom. 3:23 actually says, "for all have sinned, and lack the glory of God"; in Rom. 5:2, a key aspect of our salvation, ...something that we can *boast in*..., is our hope and expectation of the glory of God; and in Rom. 8:30, Paul declares that those God justifies, He also glorifies. As we said above, the hidden mystery, which is now revealed, is Christ in us. He is our hope of glory.) The Holy Spirit will be our Helper, and He is to be with us "unto the age", ...the conclusion of this present eon and the fullness of the coming Kingdom-age (Jn. 14:16). He is our Teacher. He brings the teachings of Jesus to our minds (Jn. 14:26). He will give us words to speak, when we need to bear witness of Jesus (Jn. 15:26,27; Lk. 12:11,12). He is given to us to show us the things God has freely given to us (1 Cor. 2:12,13). ***As a result, we can now "taste the powers of the Age to Come" (Heb. 6:5), the powers of the coming Kingdom of God, which is both here now, and is still coming.***

***This whole journey of looking at things from the perspective of "eons, epochs, periods of time which are characterized by certain realities which may not be true in other ages" is kind of a mind-bender. But it is an important foundation for being able to understand who we are in the mix of all of this, and what our role and opportunities are.***

***We know that Jesus has made us to be a kingdom of priests to God, and to Him will be glory and dominion unto the ages of the ages (Rev. 1:6). God is the One who lives unto the ages of the ages (Rev. 1:16; 10:6; 15:7). Every creature in heaven and on earth, under the earth, and in the sea will offer praise to God and Jesus, saying, "...blessing, honor, glory and dominion be to them unto the ages of the ages" (Rev. 5:13; 7:12). The day will come when the angels will finally declare, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign unto the ages of the ages" (Rev 11:15). Those who side with the enemy, who worship the Antichrist and take his mark, will receive the wrath of God, ...and the smoke of their torment will ascend unto the ages of the ages (Rev. 14:10,11; 19:1-3). The devil, the Antichrist and the false prophet will likewise be thrown into the lake of fire, and will be tormented day and night unto the ages of the ages (Rev. 20:10). But for us, we will be with God on a new earth, in a city that will come down from heaven. There will no longer be any curse, and we will see God face to face, and will serve Him and will reign with Him unto the ages of the ages (Rev. 22:5).***

***In the end, the usurper, Satan, and those who identify with him, will be destroyed and punished. The "present, evil age" will become a past lesson, ...a lesson that will show forth the evils of selfishness, and the virtues and wisdom of God and His amazing, patient grace. Ultimately, God the Supreme Power, the One and only, will be seen to be more clearly as He actually is, and we will all honor and delight in Him.***

***For now, however, we do live in this present evil age, ...an age of sin, death, bondage, and brokenness, ...an age dominated and saturated with the influence of evil, malevolent spiritual powers who seek to steal, kill and destroy human being. But, the message of John the Baptist was that a new age, the Kingdom of God, was about to come, ...a message that Jesus Himself expanded on, saying, "The Kingdom of God is here! It is present! It is among you!" If you belong to Jesus, you are part of that Kingdom, the new era, the age-to-come that is here-and-now.***